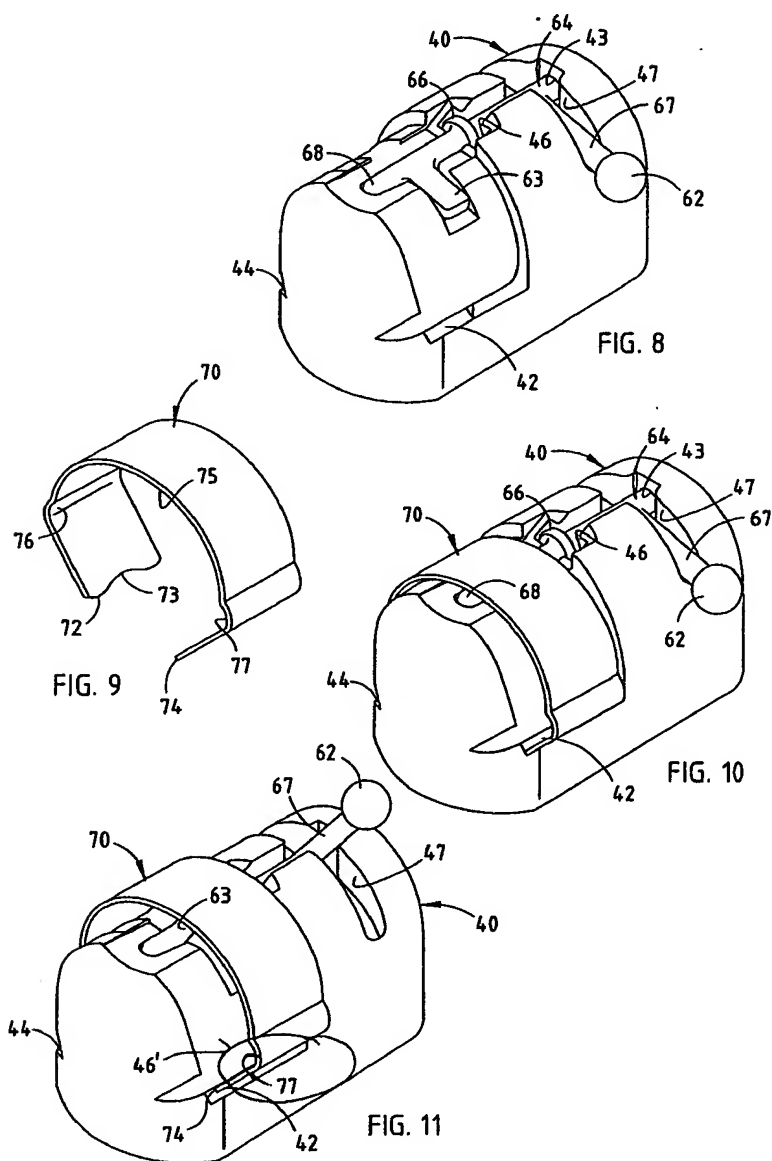


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In the Drawings

Please note the change to Fig. 11. A replacement page is attached after page 11 of this Amendment.

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REMARKS

In the Office Action, it is noted that the Examiner indicated claim 17, 18, 20, and 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and the rejection of claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 was corrected. Claims 17 and 20 have been so amended and are now in condition for allowance, as are amended claim 18 and claim 21 dependent on claim 20.

The remaining claims 12-16 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Claims 12, 15, 16, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 on a combination of Langanke (4,268,018) with Renfer (1,938,860), while claims 13 and 14 were further rejected on this combination and further in view of Pazdirek et al. (6,505,989).

By this Amendment, the sole independent claim 12 has been amended to more clearly define the unique interrelationship between Applicants' spring and cam, which facilitates the removal of a gas-assist strut from the pivotal coupling of an associated mounting ball. This is accomplished utilizing a relatively compact handle, such as handle 62 shown in Applicants' drawings, and a blade-shaped cam 63 over which rides the center section of a relatively wide, generally C-shaped spring, as shown in Figs. 9-11.

As noted by the Examiner, the Langanke patent fails to disclose Applicants' cam-actuated mechanism. The locking spring 174 of Langanke (shown in Fig. 1A and described in column 5, lines 65 et seq.) is circular in cross section, and its interconnection with the ball is not clearly disclosed. The Renfer patent is from an art area totally unrelated to that of Applicants' invention. Renfer relates to a pneumatically operated, percussion rock drill. One skilled in the art area involved in the design of gas-assisted struts, such as defined by the claims of the present

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invention, would not look to percussion rock drills for guidance. Further, however, the Renfer release mechanism operates in a different manner than Applicants' connector. Renfer operates by spreading the legs of a retainer in opposed directions between open and closed positions to allow a drill bit to be removed from the chuck. Applicants' spring and cam action is used to move the keeper spring in a direction away from the ball, whereas, in the Renfer patent, the retainer 18 remains in the same position with the chuck as the drill bit 13 and merely opens up. Applicants' cam, thus, serves to literally remove the spring from the housing by moving it in a direction away from the ball. Thus, even if the creative application of non-analogous art to Renfer was considered, it does not provide the same structure or function as now defined by amended claim 12, namely, a spring with a center band which overlies the cam and is engaged by the cam element at a center section thereof for urging the spring out of the slot. The legs of the Renfer retainer are engaged by its actuator, and it remains fully contained within the pneumatic drill so disclosed.

With respect to claims 13 and 14, the Examiner indicates that the Pazdirek reference suggests making the housing out of polymeric material. In view of the amendments to claim 12 to more clearly define the invention, it is necessary only to point out that the reference in the Pazdirek patent referenced by the Examiner is to U.S. Patent Nos. 4,435,101 and 5,152,628. The Sugiyama et al. patent (4,435,101) discloses a socket 12 which is cross-hatched for steel with the patent disclosing only a polymeric insert therefore. The also referenced U.S. Patent No. 5,152,628 (Broszat et al.) discloses a steel housing 7 with a polymeric insert 6. Applicants' invention as defined by claims 13 and 14 refer to the entire housing 40 as being made of

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polymeric material, which is not shown or suggested by Pazdirek's reference to the Sugiyama or Broszat patents.

By this Amendment, it is submitted, therefore, that claims 12-21 remaining in this application are in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully solicited. The Examiner is authorized to cancel withdrawn claims 1-11 and 22-26 upon allowance of this application, subject to Applicants right to file a divisional application on such claims during the pendency of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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April 18, 2006

Date



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